

WASHINGTON D.C. – Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15) will accept a peace offering of 1,000 red, white, and blue paper cranes, arranged as the Stars and Stripes, on its way to the White House and the President and the First Lady. This Friday, March 13, 2009, from 8:00 – 9:15 a.m., students at St. Joseph's School of Cupertino, whose Origami club prepared the cranes as an envoy of peace to President Obama, will present Rep. Honda with the peace cranes at the school, located at 10120 N. De Anza Blvd, Cupertino.

Rep. Honda commented on the cranes saying, "This symbol of peace that I'm passing along to the President is particularly dear to me as a Japanese-American and as an educator. My wife – like the character in the book Sadako and the Thousand Cranes, which inspired these peace cranes – witnessed the horrors of Hiroshima's atomic bomb. Years later, these cranes are a testament to the enduring courage of those who call for peace in times of war. Each crane is a wish to the world that our leaders will come together to end war and suffering. Each crane sends a special and unique message of peace to our president and to all who will see it. If we want a world without war, we must continue to educate for peace – and these children understand this. "

Paper cranes have long been a symbol for peace. The cranes are inspired by the children's book Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, which tells the story of Sadako Sasaki, a child who was living in Hiroshima, Japan, when the atomic bomb was dropped. Sadako developed leukemia from the radiation and spent her time in a nursing home folding paper cranes with the hope of making 1,000, which according to legend would have allowed to her to make one wish. A monument in her honor is located in Hiroshima. Children from all around the world send paper cranes to the location as a gesture of peace.

Supervised by St. Joseph's parent volunteer Kaori Nakai, in coordination with the school's lunchtime Origami Club, the St. Joseph students spent time at the origami club meetings and in art classes folding cranes. Nakai put the flag together, utilizing her 30 years of origami experience and a needle and thread, to link the students' cranes to blend a pattern of Old Glory into a traditional Japanese wind flag design. There are about 40 cranes on each of the flag's strings.